

what tomorrow will bring, standing up in the classrooms of America and pledging allegiance to the only flag they have ever known, singing the only national anthem they know, and being told by so many people: You don't belong here. You are not part of this country.

They are completely conflicted and worried and uncertain about their future, and they are nothing short of amazing. These young people have done things with their lives that are just incredible. They are the valedictorians of their classes in many cases. They have gone on to college and paid for it out of their pocket in many cases.

I have come to the floor on 54 different occasions with colored photos of these DREAMers from all over the United States, when they gave us the permission to disclose their identities, and told their stories. And every time I have told that story about that DREAMer, someone has stopped me in the hall and said: That is an amazing story about this young person who just wants to be part of the United States and its future.

So it was troubling yesterday to pick up and read the quote from STEVEN KING, who is a Congressman from Iowa. Mr. KING is no newcomer when it comes to criticizing immigration. He introduced a bill 3 or 4 weeks ago in the House of Representatives that would have removed all of the Federal funds that are being used now to spare these DREAMers in the United States from deportation. In other words, the President has issued an Executive order so the young people who are eligible for the DREAM Act can stay. He wanted to remove all the funds so they would have to be deported immediately. He called that for a vote. It passed in the U.S. House of Representatives just a few weeks ago, overwhelmingly supported by his Republican side of the aisle. So STEVEN KING has a record of opposing immigration and doing it in a very forceful way.

But they found a quote he had made, a statement he had made on the issue of DREAMers, and that is why I come to the floor today.

In an interview with Radio Iowa, Mr. KING said yesterday, as reported in the Washington Post:

"It seems as though I have a few critics out there, but those who have been advocating for the DREAM Act have been trying to make it about valedictorians," King said in an interview with Radio Iowa. "I don't disagree that there are DREAMers that are valedictorians, but it also would legalize those that are smuggling drugs into the United States."

In his original comments, Congressman KING of Iowa said, "For everyone who's a valedictorian, there's another 100 out there who weigh 130 pounds—and they've got calves the size of cantaloupes because they're hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert."

In his interview Tuesday evening, [Congressman King] doubled down on those comments—

According to the Washington Post—saying, "We have people that are mules, that are drug mules, that are hauling drugs across the border and you can tell by their physical characteristics what they've been doing it for months."

Mr. President, if you are going to be part of this political business, you better have a pretty tough spine and a pretty hard shell because people throw criticism around all the time, and if you cannot take it, this ain't beanbag, do something else.

But I deeply resent what was said by Congressman KING about these DREAMers. It is totally unfair. It is mean, and it is hateful. Do not take my word for it; take the words of the Republican leaders who responded to Mr. KING.

House Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, commenting on Congressman KING's comments, called them "wrong" and "hateful." That is from Speaker BOEHNER.

House majority leader ERIC CANTOR, Republican of Virginia, said they were "inexcusable."

During a House Judiciary Committee subcommittee hearing Tuesday, Representative JOSEPH GARCIA, Democrat of Florida, described KING's words as "beneath the dignity of this body."

Representative RAUL LABRADOR, Republican of Idaho, who has been heavily involved in immigration reform, expressed hope Wednesday that KING regretted his remarks. "There's nobody in the conference who would say such a thing and I hope that he, if he thought about it, he wouldn't say such a thing again," LABRADOR said.

It is heartening to know that Members of Congressman KING's own political party—Republicans—have stated unequivocally how awful his statement was. It troubles me and it is heart-breaking to think that these DREAMers—these young people who are simply asking for a chance to be part of the United States—would be characterized as dope smugglers and drug smugglers.

Obviously, Congressman KING has never read the DREAM Act because if you have ever been convicted of a crime, you cannot be approved through the DREAM Act for citizenship—not a serious crime. That is part of the law. He should know better, but I am not sure that he cares.

I am glad Members of his own party have stepped up and branded these comments for what they are. What I have to say to him is, take a moment away from the media, meet some of these DREAMers, and hear their stories. Hear what they have been through, and hear about what they want to do with their lives for the future of the United States of America.

To the DREAMers themselves, this is not the first criticism they have run into. They have taken a lot. They are courageous young men and women.

When I started this trek, this 12-year trek on the DREAM Act, I used to give speeches in Chicago about the bill, and there would be audiences full of Hispanics usually. Nothing much would be

said. I would go out to my car afterward, and in the darkness there would be a couple students waiting by the car. They would call me to the side, after they looked both ways to make sure no one was around, and they would say: Senator, we are DREAMers. We are counting on you to give us a chance. Over the years, these young people who waited to greet me in the darkness when no one was around have now stepped up. They are identifying who they are so America knows what is at stake.

When you meet the DREAMers, you will realize how awful and wrong these statements by Congressman KING are. There will always be critics of immigration in America. It is part of our national tradition. But I do believe the vast majority of Americans are fair people. They are people who believe in justice. They do not believe that a child—that a child—should be held responsible for any wrongdoing by their parent. If their parent brought them to the United States as a baby, they had no voice in that decision. Why should they be penalized for that decision? They should be given their own chance to become part of this Nation's future.

I will close by saying that maybe Tereza Lee was not the first DREAMer in my life. My mother was brought here at the age of 2 and certainly did not have much of a voice in the decision to come to America. But thank goodness her mother and father decided to make that trip and that my grandparents located in Illinois and gave me a chance to grow up in a great place with a great family. That is my story, and that is America's story.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, Senator DURBIN is such an eloquent champion for righting injustice, and I am always impressed with him, and I do agree that the American people are good and decent people. They want the right thing. They want the right thing on immigration. Part of that is a lawful system of immigration that serves the national interests of our country. We disagree on how to get there sometimes, but you cannot dispute the passion of Senator DURBIN.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I want to share some thoughts about the President's tour today and the last couple of days talking about jobs.

Well, I have to say, first and foremost, this country is not doing well economically. It is just not.

You hear the stock market is up, and people try to translate that into substantial progress in the economy. But it is just not there, particularly with jobs. The fourth quarter of last year, our GDP growth was .4 percent. By the time the first half of this year concludes, we are not going to have 2 percent growth over that period.

You are not going to create jobs unless you have economic growth. We are not seeing it. Wages are down. Wages have declined since 1999 for working Americans by virtually any calculation. Wages have been declining. Unemployment is up. The number of people working today is 2.1 million fewer than in 2007. We have 2.1 million fewer people working today than in 2007.

This is the slowest economic recovery since the Great Depression, there is no doubt about that. But we have done all kinds of extraordinary things. We had the biggest stimulus—all borrowed—spent. They are going to stimulate the economy and create growth. Has it produced real growth or is it just a sugar high, as one of the Wall Street gurus referred to it? It appears quite clear that it is a sugar-type high.

We have more and more plans from our leadership here in the Senate. It is basically tax and spend. The American people are hurting. Their wages are falling and so forth. They have unemployment problems. So we promise to tax more and we are going to spread more money around and borrow more. And this is somehow going to put us on a sound path to prosperity, job growth, and wage increases, which is what we need. Please note these facts.

I do not mind the President talking about the issue. I know he is using the words “middle class.” Well, he should. Middle-class working Americans, struggling Americans—someone needs to be thinking about them. But you also have to have policies. A speech is not a policy. A speech is not tangible, something that creates growth, jobs, prosperity, and increased wages. GDP growth last quarter was only 1.8 percent and has averaged at or under 2 percent since the end of the recession in 2009.

There is a major corporation, a CEO—which is common throughout the business—he just said quite frankly: We are not hiring anybody if the GDP growth in America is not over 3 percent.

Well, we haven't had 3 percent growth—hardly had it—since 2009. He actually is not filling vacancies still even though we are having modest growth and people possibly are trying to oversell that.

I am just saying that the economy is struggling. It is not growing rapidly enough to create jobs. We have record unemployment.

The Wall Street Journal panel of economic experts expects slow growth for the rest of this year at 2 percent or less. They have revised their forecast down. The President and Congressional Budget Office a year or so ago were predicting higher numbers than this. They are not coming in. Now they are revising downward what they expect the economy to do in the second half of the year.

We need more than a speech, in my opinion. After 6 years since the beginning of the recession, we still have not created as many jobs as existed in De-

cember of 2007. Americans are working 5 billion less hours than in 2007. Think about that—5 billion less hours than in 2007.

Some say: Well, our immigration plan—my colleague recalled my attention to it—is somehow going to fix that. We will bring in more workers, and everyone is going to get pay raises, and unemployment is going to be reduced.

But that is not what the Congressional Budget Office told us.

At a time when we are struggling to find jobs for American workers, many of the unemployed are immigrants to the country, African Americans, poor people struggling to get by, and you continue to bring in a larger flow of labor than the country can absorb. As Mr. Peter Kirsanow from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights said, we do not have a shortage of workers in America, we have an excess of workers in America. We have more workers than we have jobs.

The fastest growing type of work today is part-time employment. Over 320,000 part-time jobs were created last month compared to 95,000 full-time jobs. They are counting these part-time employment jobs as employment. Well it is better than nothing, I suppose. We are having a surge of part-time employment, driven in large measure by the President's health care policies. It just is. Everybody knows that.

New unemployment claims, which came out this week, are up. In other words, the number of people who are filing for unemployment insurance has gone up, I hate to say. There were 7,000 more in July, to 343,000.

The average net worth of American households is down. Someone said recently that net worth was back to nearly what it was prior to the recession. That was something we heard based on, I guess, the stock market primarily. But another analysis looked at it and said: Well, what about the share of the debt of Americans? That has increased dramatically since 2007. Once you calculate the debt all of us owe as American citizens to the total debt of America, household net worth is 60 percent lower than it was in 2007.

It is time for this Nation to begin a serious discussion about what it is that is causing our economy to slide and what we can do realistically to create jobs, increase growth, get higher wages, and so forth. One of the things we should not do is bring in more labor than we have jobs for. That is pretty simple to me. One of the things we should do is try to bring down the cost of energy, not increase the cost of energy. One of the things we should do is eliminate the unnecessary regulations that drive up costs and produce nothing but a burden in exchange. We need a tax system that favors growth. We need to defend on the world stage the legitimate interests of America and our working people. We have not effectively fought back against unfair

trade. We can do a better job of that. There are a lot of things we can do that do not revolve around taxing more, borrowing more, and spending more. That is what the policies are here.

We have a bill on the floor right now that busts the budget wide open. We agreed to these limits 2 years ago. Senator SHELBY, the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, stood firm for the agreement levels we agreed to. It was not easy, but we agreed to it. Oh, no, the majority has to spend more than the amount that currently is limited by law.

So I guess what I would say is that President Obama is correct to at least talk about this issue, but we need to do more than talk. About all we are hearing when the President talks is plans to invest more, to spend more, to tax more, and to borrow more. That will not change the debt course of America. We need real policies to put us on a path to prosperity that protects the American worker from unfair foreign competition, from excessive labor brought into the country, and from too high energy costs. There are a lot of other things we can do that would promote prosperity in the country.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Alabama.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, as we all know, we have a jobs crisis in America. High unemployment and weak economic growth have festered for nearly 5 years. American families are increasingly dependent upon government, and businesses are being suffocated by it all over this country.

I believe our ability to emerge from this jobs crisis stronger than before depends upon government performing its proper role in the economy. In my view, that role is to establish the conditions for job creation and economic growth in the private sector. Through stable fiscal policy, a simplified tax code, and streamlined regulation, the government can create an economic environment conducive to risk-taking and innovation that leads to real job creation in this country. Unfortunately, the same toxic combination of government overreach and inaction which has failed to produce a jobs recovery in this country thus far also threatens to prolong the jobs crisis, I believe, for years to come.

We learned in the last few days that President Obama is planning a PR blitz to gloss over his failed economic agenda. Over a series of speeches he will give around the country, he said he will discuss his vision for the future. But he will offer nothing new. According to the New York Times, his jobs plan is “largely repackaging economic proposals that the President has offered for years.” We need a fresh free market approach to job creation. Stale Obama policy leftovers will not cut it. They are not new ideas. It is not a new beginning.